An Empirical Investigation on Terrestrial and Online Gamblers’ Perceptions towards e-Gambling Activities

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ABSTRACT

E-gambling has dramatically changed the way of wagering and nowadays even more individuals are moving from the terrestrial to online gambling venues. At the same time, it is considered as one of the fastest growing sectors of e-commerce. Characteristically, the global internet gambling gross market is expected to exceed US $43 billion by 2015. As a consequence, its dynamics has forced many researchers to investigate e-gambling scientific field from different perspectives trying to gain an improved insight into gamblers behavior in the cyberspace. The scope of this paper is to examine the perceived advantages and disadvantages of terrestrial and online gamblers towards e-gambling activities focusing on university students. Furthermore, it aims to identify possible differences and similarities between the two groups of respondents. The research results are believed to provide interesting insights to both academia and gambling industry.

KEYWORDS

E-Business, E-Gambling, Gambling Behavior, Perceptions Analysis

INTRODUCTION

Electronic gambling, also known as online gambling or internet gambling, can be defined as the process of gambling real money over the Internet. Specifically, according to Wood & Williams (2011), it characterizes all forms of wagering via the World Wide Web through varied media including computers, mobile phones, wireless devices and interactive television. Beginning in the early 1990s, as the Internet access expanded into private residences and workplaces, gamblers were introduced to a new-fangled area of Internet-based gambling opportunities. Moreover, it was boosted by the advancements of mobile technology and the exponential growth of smartphone and tablet technology, as well as the wide progress of networking technology. As a consequence, any form of traditional gambling soon appeared in its electronic format and have since been easily reached to any person with an Internet connection and means of electronically transferring money (Wood & Williams, 2011). Sports betting, skill games such as poker and blackjack, lucky games such as slot machines roulette, as well as many other e-gambling games have been widely available offering numerous e-gambling features and playing options.

Nowadays, e-gambling is a highly profitable business with numerous websites varied from enterprises offering pure gambling choices to others providing relevant information, such as odds and payout rates. It is also characterized as one of the fastest growing sectors of e-commerce being forced by overcoming many of the restricted laws that were supposed to regulate gambling activity (Wood & Williams, 2007). Characteristically, the global internet gambling gross market is expected...
to exceed US$43 billion by 2015 (Global Betting and Gaming Consultants, 2011; Holliday, 2011). Furthermore, it seems to be outpacing casino gambling, growing at a rate of about 12% per annum, and represents an increasingly crucial sector (around 9%) of the gambling market (Global Betting and Gaming Consultants, 2010; Kelleher, 2010; PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2011). Hence, despite the fact that land-based gambling industry has experienced a decline, outgoings on e-gambling appears to be increasing (Gainsbury et al., 2012).

E-gambling offers various advantages not only to individuals, but also to enterprises. On the consumer’s side, the three most commonly cited advantages have been the greater convenience, the 24h availability and the better payout rates. Moreover, the faster bidding and the fact that you do not have to move from your place are other two greatly mentioned factors that motivate individuals to gamble online (e.g., Gainsbury et al., 2012; Griffiths & Barnes, 2008; Griffiths, 2009; Griffiths et al., 2009; McBride & Derevensky, 2009; Wood & Williams, 2007, 2009, 2011). On the enterprise’s side, e-gambling has significantly changed the way firms present, advertise, sell and communicate with existing and potential customers. Furthermore, it offers them access to a much greater market that extends well beyond the traditional geographic markets serviced by their terrestrial venues.

Regarding Greece, e-gambling has been gradually emerged in the last years. According to Eltrun (2011), Greek e-gamblers were estimated to about 400,000 people in 2011; increased by 33% compared to 2010. Additionally, they have used the Internet and purchased online 20% more compared to the rest of Greek e-consumers. The annual gross market has been estimated between €210 million to €260 million and the annual amount of money that each person spent between €250 and €320 (Gambling Data, 2011). More recent studies presented that e-gambling services have been utilized by the 9% (Eltrun, 2013) and 13.5% (Saprikis, 2014) of the Greek e-shopping community.

Thus, in order to obtain a thorough point of view regarding gamblers’ perceptions towards e-gambling, this paper aims to investigate e-gamblers and terrestrial gamblers perceptions towards e-gambling and reveals possible differences and similarities among them focusing on university students. Specifically, the study examines their perceived advantages and disadvantages on e-gambling. By understanding gamblers’ behavior, the relevant websites, as well as potential e-gambling ventures would be able to incorporate suitable marketing strategies, moderate gamblers’ concerns and convince even more people being transferred from offline to online gambling. Furthermore, they would be able to persuade current e-gamblers increase the amount of money spent.

The rest of the paper is organized as follows. In the first section, the related literature review and information about the current study are presented. This is followed by the methodology and the results of the survey. The last section concludes with the implications of the study, its limitations and directions for future research.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND CURRENT STUDY

The examination of e-gambling is gaining in importance due to its successful and broad spread worldwide. Thus, several researches have been carried out in e-gambling scientific field from different perspectives trying to gain an improved insight into e-gamblers behavior in cyberspace (Griffiths, 2009). These have primarily included studies investigating adult e-gambling (e.g., Gambling Commission, 2008; Griffiths et al., 2009), regional studies of internet gamblers (e.g., Wood & Williams, 2007), studies examining behavioral tracking data of online gamblers from analogous websites (e.g., Broda et al., 2008; LaBrie et al., 2007, 2008), case studies (Griffiths & Parke, 2007), researches on adolescent online gambling (e.g., Griffiths & Wood, 2007), studies on selected samples of e-gamblers (e.g., Griffiths & Barnes, 2008; Matthews et al., 2009), researches examining internet gambling and social responsibility features (e.g., Griffiths et al., 2009) and studies investigating specific types of e-gambling such as online sports betting (e.g., LaBrie et al., 2007; LaPlante et al., 2008). Although there have been few empirical studies carried out on the psychosocial effects of Internet gambling, the vast majority of them have dealt with the examination of the demographic
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